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Contact: Marta Bortner
(916) 327-4050

SECRETARY BAKER RELEASES STATEMENT REGARDING PRESIDENT OBAMA SIGNING LEGISLATION TO EXPAND NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS

Sacramento, CA – Today, Secretary Karen Baker released the following statement after President Obama signed the landmark Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, which will greatly expand national and community service opportunities aimed at strengthening our nation's communities.

"By signing the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, President Obama demonstrated his commitment to our communities and the value volunteering and service to our nation. This historic legislation will triple the number of AmeriCorps members meeting critical community needs, launch specialized corps programs to support our struggling health care system and our environment and expand options to serve.

Governor Schwarzenegger and First Lady Maria Shriver have led the nation in their focus and investment in service and volunteering in the Golden State. Under their leadership, California became the first state with a cabinet post dedicated to volunteering, CaliforniaVolunteers launched the largest statewide online matching network in the country and a Green Jobs Corps to provide job training to at risk youth in our state's emerging green economy.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all of California's volunteers who contribute their time and talents to strengthen our communities and state. I am excited about the tremendous opportunity that this new legislation provides and I look forward to working with our federal, state and local partners to strengthen our nonprofits, expand our state's volunteer programs and tackle our community challenges."

Governor Schwarzenegger earlier today released this [statement](#):

"Whether volunteering after natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina, helping out at a soup kitchen or mentoring a child, Americans have confirmed over and over their passion for service. The Serve America Act provides every American even greater opportunity to serve in programs that strengthen communities and address our nation's needs in education, environmental protection, public health and more. Here in California we have millions of volunteers who give their time every year to serve others, and that's why I brought this kind of civic engagement to the highest level of state government by appointing the first-in-the nation cabinet secretary for service and volunteerism."

Governor Schwarzenegger also proclaimed April 19-25 as "Volunteer Week" in California.

"Volunteers play a vital role in nearly every aspect of our state, whether by providing disaster relief, mentoring children or in countless other ways," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "The service demonstrated by these Californians is immeasurable, and I ask every resident of our state to join me in recognizing their hard work."

The full text of the proclamation is available at <http://www.gov.ca.gov/proclamation/12074/>.

CaliforniaVolunteers

CaliforniaVolunteers is the state office that manages programs and initiatives to increase the number of Californians involved with service and volunteering, including the state AmeriCorps program, California Citizen Corps and the Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning. Through the innovative Web site, CaliforniaVolunteers.org, individuals and families can find more than 45,000 volunteer opportunities throughout the state involving the arts, education, animals, disaster preparedness, the environment and other areas of interest. Karen Baker, the nation's first state cabinet secretary of service and volunteering leads the organization and First Lady Maria Shriver serves as the honorary chairperson. For more information, please visit www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org.

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